

## **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION WORKSHEET: RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Visual Quality**

Crane Point Vegetation Restoration

Palouse Ranger District

Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest

#### **Description of the Proposed Action**

The proposed actions for this project are as follows:

- 701 acres of commercial harvest (622 acres regeneration and 79 acres commercial thinning)
  - Estimate approx. 8-10 MMBF (\$1.5 Million) yield of timber for local communities
- 20 acres of Old Growth enhancement
- 241 acres of non-commercial fuels treatment

The following would be conducted in support of the above:

- Approximately four (4) miles of temporary roads would be constructed to facilitate vegetation treatments and would be decommissioned no later than three (3) years after the project is completed.
- Road maintenance, reconstruction, or improvement.
- Replace culvert on FR 1274.

#### ***Required Design Features***

The following design features are required to ensure compliance with the regulatory framework for this resource and/or to reduce the risk of adverse impacts to this resource. A description is provided as to when, where and how the design feature should be applied and/or what conditions would trigger the need to apply the design feature.

1. Within all viewsheds, created openings within treatment units should not be symmetrical in shape. Straight lines and right angles should be avoided. Created openings should resemble the size and shape of those found in the surrounding natural landscape. Treatments should follow natural topographic breaks and changes in vegetation if possible.

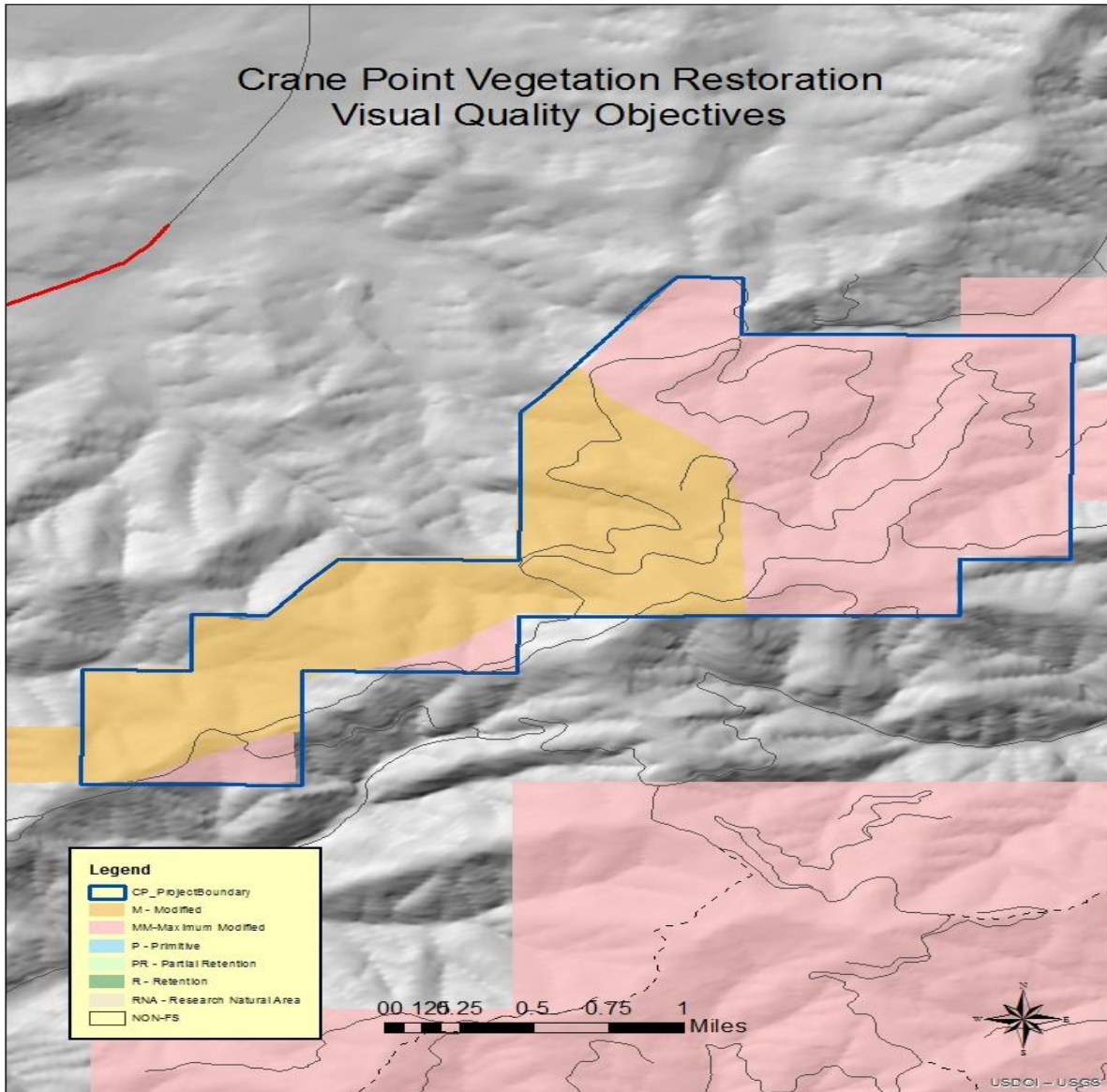
***Anticipated Effectiveness:*** Moderate Effectiveness. Creating openings that emulate natural openings reduces the visual impact of harvest activities in the long and short term.

#### **Cause-Effect Relationship**

Proposed harvesting would be visible from travel corridors and use areas within the analysis area and therefore may have an effect on the scenic conditions of the area by introducing openings that currently do not exist. With the design feature outlined above, the proposed

harvest areas would meet the Clearwater National Forest Management Plan (1987) standards for Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) (Figure 1). While the appearance of the area may change somewhat, the activities would be designed to appear similar to the naturally occurring mosaic of openings found in the area which have been created by insect and disease and wildfire.

Figure 1. Visual Quality Objectives for the Crane Point project



## **Regulatory Framework**

### ***Compliance with Forest Plan and Other Relevant Laws, Regulations, and Policies:***

The Crane Point Project meets Visual Quality Objectives as listed in the 1987 Clearwater National

Forest Plan. The proposed action has been reviewed and is determined to be in compliance with the management framework applicable to this resource. The laws, regulations, policies and Forest Plan direction applicable to this project and this resource are as follows:

All landscape-altering activities would meet adopted Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs). Duration of visual impacts would meet the guidelines outlined for each VQO in Agriculture Handbook No. 462-Chapter 2. Harvest activities proposed for this project would be visible from several viewpoints, but would be designed to emulate the openings created by natural processes within the area when viewed in the middle and background viewsheds. Openings, designed to emulate naturally shaped openings and with the retention of some stand structure, would meet the requirements for the VQOs of *Modification* and *Maximum Modification*.

**Extraordinary Circumstances**

No extraordinary circumstances need to be considered for visual resources.

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